URISA '89: States Activities

by Lisa Warnecke

This year, for the first time, the conference included a special track about geographic and land information development and coordination activities in the states. Eight sessions and two meetings were held, including presentations by representatives of 29 states about activities within their states. Organized by Lisa Warnecke, Paul Davis and Joe Ferreira, the sessions gave conference attendees an opportunity to hear about progress in their own state, and state representatives a chance to learn from each other. In addition to general coordination, specific topics included the relationships between states and their local governments, the use of GIS in reapportionment activities, and the development of regional consortia of states such as the New England states.

The states group prepared a request for the URISA Board of Directors that a new Special Interest Group, titled State/Provincial SIG be formed. The group elected Alan Robinette, Director of the Minnesota Land Management Information Center, to serve as its first chair. The Board approved the formation of the new SIG at their meeting on August 10.

The conference track included the following activities.

STATES GROUP MEETINGS: IDENTIFYING COMMON NEEDS, ISSUES, AND OPPORTUNITIES; AND FORMATION OF A STATE/PROVINCIAL SIG

A preconference meeting was held on Sunday to discuss future activities, conference sessions, share experiences and provided an informational update on activities at the federal level. Topics included those presented in a "States Update" that was sent to all state representatives by URISA a few weeks earlier. Specifically, PL100-409's mandated Land Information Study was discussed. The National Governors' Association represented states in the core group that developed the study, and some states were contacted to provide some information for it. The group concluded there is a growing need for states to be kept informed and able to have individual and collective input on activities and directives at the federal level.

In addition to these topics, representatives from One Call Systems and 911 Emergency Reporting System were invited to attend and describe these efforts in the nation's states. Both of these initiatives are growing in the states and offer opportunities for collaboration and possible models and resources for developing financial support for improved development and coordination of geographic and land information.

Jonathan Salk, Director of Chapter Services of the American Public Works Association, and Steve Rieben, Manager of Connecticut's Call Before You Dig Program, described One Call Systems. These systems exist in most states, and participation is mandated in some. Frequently known as "call before you dig" programs, they rely on location based information for all utilities, but frequently do not use automated mapping or GIS to support their work. Jonathan also described related activities of APWA and potential areas of collaboration. Their activities include a research project about geographic information development in local governments to be conducted in 1990.

Statewide 911 Emergency Reporting Systems were also discussed. Similar to One Call Systems, these systems are also developing in a number of states, including about 15 with statewide systems and related programs funded by specific appropriations. Two states, Delaware and Rhode Island, are developing statewide enhanced 911 services (E911). Oregon's geographic information coordination activities specifically includes development of a reference base for 911.

In addition to the Sunday meeting, URISA sponsored a breakfast meeting for states representatives on the last day of the conference. Topics discussed at this meeting included final conclusions about activities for the GIS/LIS conference in Orlando in November and other conferences, including URISA 90. Two sessions will be held at GIS/LIS, one about states activities, describing various models for statewide coordination, and the other about the relationship between GIS and other information technologies.

CONFERENCE SESSIONS ABOUT STATES

Eight sessions were held about activities in states. As noted below, three were about general coordination activities, two were about states relating to local governments, one was about a specific topic of interest and growth, GIS used in state reapportionment efforts, and the final two provided in-depth case analyses of states with papers that were published in the conference proceedings. The first six sessions were taped and are being transcribed. Efforts are underway to have these talks edited, printed and available for distribution with other relevant information about state activities. Any offers of assistance in this effort are most welcome and appreciated as an expressed need was described to have such a resource available prior to the 1990 state legislation sessions.

Geographic and Land Information Development (GLID) and Coordination Efforts in the States: Trends, Roles and Opportunities Chaired by Lisa Warnecke. Speakers included: Nancy Tosta (California), John Hall (Florida), Jim Parker (Kansas), Charlie Parson (Minnesota), Dave Healy (Vermont) and Al Miller (Wisconsin).

(continued on page 7)

URISA '89: States Activities (continued from page 5)

Each of the states represented in this session presented a different potential model for geographic and land information coordination on a statewide basis. Each speaker presented a brief update on their activities, including specific themes used in their state, such as improved coordination of natural resources or growth management, and descriptions of legal directives. Coordinating groups and their roles, responsibilities and activities were also discussed, including specific projects. State representatives also discussed statewide planning, policies, standards, reference bases, funding and clearinghouse initiatives, as well as relationships with federal agencies and local governments.

Tuesday's two sessions gave other states some time to give presentations about their activities. These sessions also provided an opportunity for local governments, businesses, academicians and others in each state to learn about coordination and development activities in their state, as well as for states to share experiences and help define and address some common issues and needs.

New England GIS Activities in State and Local Government Chaired by Joseph Ferreira, Jr. Speakers included: Walter A. Anderson (Maine), Sandy Prisloe (Connecticut), David Scott (New Hampshire), John Stachelhaus (Rhode Island), Richard Taupier (Massachusetts), and Matt Wilburt (Boston). In addition to hearing about each state's activities, methods to address sharing of information, joint activities and other examples of collaboration between states were also discussed.

Roll Call and Update on State Geographic and Land Information Development (GLID) and Coordination Efforts Chaired by Paul Davis. Speakers included: Allen Cox (Montana), Charles Palmer (Texas), Nancy Tosta (California), Ken Dueker (Oregon), Kay Brown (Alaska), Bob Guida (Wisconsin), Alan Robinette (Minnesota), Kathy McCarter (Indiana), Pat Cummens (New Jersey), Tom Tribble (North Carolina), William Shinar (South Carolina), John Hall (Florida), Jim Davis (Georgia), Roger Durham (Virginia), Belenda Holland (Kentucky), and Paul Davis (Mississippi).

SESSIONS ABOUT STATES WORKING WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

As many URISA members and conference attendees represent local governments, two sessions were held to specifically address the growing opportunities and level of activity between state and local governments.

Geographic and Land Information Development (GLID) Programs to Assist Local Governments Chaired by Lisa Warnecke. Speakers included David Scott (New Hampshire), Robert Kitchen (New York) and Donald Holloway (North Carolina).

This session presented potential models for states about programs that have been developed by some states to assist local governments. It described how states and local governments can work together in building geographic and land information, and how state programs have helped both state and local governments alike. Some benefits to local governments have included guidance and technical assistance, reference bases and data, standards, technology, and procurement assistance. Benefits to states include improved local information for state needs and commonality among local governments to facilitate aggregation. Improved reporting, sharing mechanisms, joint projects, state clearinghouses and lessons learned were also discussed. It was suggested that states should consider working with state Advisory Commissions on Intergovernmental Relations that exist in over half of the states.

Sharing Data Among State and Local Governments: Problems of Scale, Resolution and Data Integrity Chaired by Jonathan Corson-Rikert. Speakers included: Gary Smith (University of Vermont), Michael Terner (State of Massachusetts), Peter August (University of Rhode Island), and Fay Rubin (University of New Hampshire).

This session included examples of regional or smaller scale data that is used in local GIS efforts. The discussion focused on how to make data integration more possible, including the practicalities of originating more digital data at the local level and the problems of maintaining integrity as local and state level data are updated.

ADDITIONAL SESSIONS ABOUT STATES

Use of Digital and Conventional Methods in State Reapportionment Efforts Chaired by Paul Davis. Speakers included Paul Davis (Mississippi), Ian Koeppel (New York), Ronald Emihovich (Florida), Dave Healy (Vermont) and Jerry Sullivan (Wisconsin).

This session provided attendees with examples and potential models of how some states are handling their reapportionment requirements with regard to both digital and conventional information and methods. The session also discussed the unique mandates that states are required to follow when conducting redistricting, and the impact of these mandates. In addition, the speakers discussed how their states are addressing reapportionment requirements whether or not they participated in the Census Bureau's Phase I program. Use of GIS was also discussed, including how existing GIS offices in states might provide assistance to offices in their state who have responsibility for reapportionment.

Various papers were presented about states in addition to the above sessions, some of which are included in the proceedings.